



IRVINE ROAD AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

newsletter

Your voice in the local community

NOVEMBER 2017

<http://www.irara.org.uk>

IF YOU ARE NOT
ALREADY A MEMBER,
JOIN IRARA NOW!

THE IRARA CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE THE ANCIENT IRVINE ROAD ORCHARD RESULTS IN A COMPROMISE WITH THE DEVELOPERS....

Orchard compromise



It's been a long time coming, but at last we have some good news on the Irvine Road Orchard. A compromise deal with the developers means we now have a genuine opportunity to preserve 60% of the land as a community orchard, an educational resource for schools and an improved local wildlife site.

Following on from the recent survey, the IRARA Committee has decided to back a compromise agreement regarding the proposed development of the orchard that lies behind Irvine Road. The Committee have not taken that decision lightly but the results of the survey and the views expressed at the residents' meeting in August 2016 reinforce the Committee's view that an agreement with the owner, Lexden Restorations, represents the best option for the Orchard, providing an opportunity to improve its wildlife and its value to the community.

IRARA has been fighting against the development of the the Orchard and lobbying for its protection as a wildlife area for over 10 years. The land was sold over a year ago and the terms of the sale state that the owner must apply to develop the land within 5 years (now 4) of purchase. The owner is also contractually obliged to appeal if the local Council opposes development. However Council opposition is now less likely as the draft Local Plan states that development on up to 40% of the site would be appropriate, substantially increasing the likelihood of development being approved by the Council, or a Planning Inspector on appeal. More information on the background is provided on our website (www.irara.org.uk)

Given this situation, and encouraged by the views at the meeting in 2016, the Committee has been exploring a possible compromise agreement with Lexden Restorations which would see a development of 6 houses on 40% of the land and the remainder of the land being sold or leased to the community – the Irvine Road

Community Orchard. The sketch indicates the sort of development that is proposed. Over recent weeks, 20% of households in the IRARA area responded to our questionnaire with three-quarters of replies supporting a compromise. We understand that some of you will continue to oppose the development and we will do our best to address the concerns that have been raised with us. However, we believe that this opportunity to secure the majority of the Orchard for its wildlife and the community is now the right course to pursue.

There is still much to be worked out but we are confident that Jonathan Frank, the owner of Lexden Restorations, is committed to working with us to find a way of making the Community Orchard a reality. We would love to think that, in a few years time, local schools will be able to use it as a learning resource and the community will be restoring the wildlife area and hosting pick-your-own days. Just see what has been possible at Highwoods:

http://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/15561511.PICTURES__Apple_lovers_celebrate_the_best_of_British/

This is no small undertaking and we will need your help to make this happen – if you have any questions or think you might be interested in helping run, manage, fundraise or promote this new Orchard please drop us a line on info@irara.org.uk.

We will keep you up to date with developments via www.irara.org.uk and the facebook page.



This newsletter is delivered to all residents within the Irvine Road Area. If you do not wish to receive it, please contact Chairman Gavin Sandercock at gavinsandercock@hotmail.com
Irvine Road Area Residents' Association is a non-political organisation. It acts independently of any political party and is not affiliated to any other body which has as its objectives the advancement of any political interest

FOOTPATH APPLICATION ON TRACK

The application to establish a public footpath between Philip Morant School and Colchester High School for Girls passes its first test.

IRARA's joint application (in partnership with Councillor Sue Lissimore) to have the footpath between the schools adopted as a formal public right of way has now been approved by the Essex County Council Highways Department. This is good news, as it means that ECC are now supporting our aim, but it isn't over yet. The application is now in a consultation phase, and objections from Philip Morant School (at least) are virtually certain. We don't know if the other schools will object.

The school will probably object on the grounds of 'pupil safety' as this has been the reason they have always used to justify their resistance to turning the footpath into a proper public right of way.



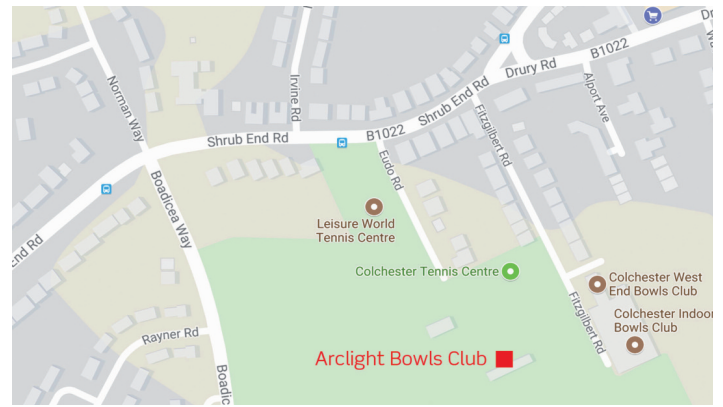
The path between the schools: A vital daily access route for pupils from 3 schools, as well as the logical choice for the principal pedestrian route from Shrub End to Lexden and the town centre. This photo was taken in 2003, before the gates were installed and proves that until then members of the public had unfettered access to this route, more than 38 years.

The footpath has been in continuous use for over 60 years and in that time there have been no recorded incidents as far as we are aware of any pupils being placed at risk as a result.

When the schools were built the original intention was always to have a through route from Shrub End to Lexden and ECC have recognised this in their response to the application, but whether the schools will respect it remains to be seen.

It is likely that the application will go to an independent adjudication process where we may be required to make the case again, but we will keep fighting.

www.facebook.com/IrvineRoadAreaResidentsAssociation



IRARA AGM

Because we've been awaiting the outcome of the negotiation about the future of the Irvine Road Orchard, the IRARA AGM is later than usual this year.

The 2017 IRARA Annual General Meeting will be held at the Arclight Bowls Club in Eudo Road on Wednesday November 29th. It will start at 7.30 and everyone is welcome. You don't have to be a member to attend, but you will need to join if you want a vote. You can join on the day, it's only £3 per household and the drinks are cheap too!

If you have recently moved into the area, why not come along and meet some of your neighbours and find out what's going on.

IRARA 2018 Christmas Social

Continuing the social theme, the annual IRARA get together will be held this year on Saturday December 8th, again at the Arclight Bowls Club in Eudo Road, starting at 7.30pm. There will be nibbles and drinks and everyone is welcome. You do not need to be a member, as it's just an excuse to meet and chat with friends and neighbours from the area.

We are particularly aware that in the last year or two a number of 'new arrivals' have moved into the Irvine Road area and the Christmas Social is a great way to meet the locals and stay in touch with what's going on in the neighbourhood.

IRARA Membership

The Irvine Road Area officially covers Irvine Road, Athelstan Road, Capel Road, Audley Road and the parts of Maldon Road and Shrub End Road running between Irvine Road and Athelstan Road, but we are very aware that many of the issues that concern us are also of interest to residents of adjacent areas. We are always happy to hear from people who support our efforts to save the local open spaces and even if you don't live in the area you can always become an associate member. If you are interested in joining IRARA, fill in the form below.



Member of Federation
of Colchester Residents'
Associations

Member of Open
Spaces Society

Irvine Road Area Residents' Association Membership application/renewal form 2017/18

Annual membership of IRARA is £3.00 per household and is open to anyone living in Athelstan Road, Audley Road, Capel Road, Irvine Road and adjacent parts of Maldon Road and Shrub End Road.

Name:

Email address:

Address:

Telephone No:

I wish to receive newsletters via: email ☐ hard copy ☐

I/We wish to apply for membership ☐

I/We wish to renew our membership ☐

Would you be interested in helping with some of the association's activities (for example, leaflet drops, litter clearing etc.) Yes ☐ No ☐

Please fill in this form and hand it to your representative or send it to: Simon Grinham, IRARA Membership Secretary, The Old Sweet Shop, Athelstan Road, Colchester CO3 3TR.